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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 001532

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/20/2015

TAGS: PREL PGOV MARR KPKO CG UG

SUBJECT: LRA INCURSION INTO DRC CONFIRMED; MONUC AND GDRC RESPONDING

REF: KINSHASA 1519

Classified By: PolCouns MSanderson, reasons 1.4 b/d.

¶11. (C) PolCouns followed up evening of September 20 with MONUC on the question of a possible incursion into the DRC by elements of the Lords Resistance Army (LRA). MONUC confirmed that about 320 armed LRA elements, accompanied by about 50 family members, had entered the DRC through Sudan the evening of September 19, and are now in the forest about six kilometers inside DRC territory (near the border with Sudan), close to the village of Aba. The group, who is armed with about 300 AK-47s, several RPGs, and at least one mortar, has not yet caused any widespread IDP movement as they have not troubled the village. Congolese regional military commander General Padiri has been in touch by cell phone with the LRA group leader, who has indicated that the group wishes to surrender. According to MONUC, Padiri will continue negotiations with the LRA group leader today, keeping UNHCR and MONUC briefed on the possible surrender terms.

¶12. (C) Padiri also has dispatched a company from the First Integrated Brigade of FARDC from Isiro, and MONUC is attempting to pre-position fuel in Aru to enable it to provide air cover, if necessary. General Camaert has ordered that another two helicopters (in addition to the original two from September 20) be diverted from delivering elections registration kits. Minister of Interior told PolCouns evening of September 20 that President Kabila has been fully briefed on the situation and the presidency is considering trying to contact Ugandan President Museveni to brief him on the Congolese and MONUC responses.

¶13. (C) Comment: MONUC commented favorably on the quick and appropriate FARDC response. Camaert's Chief of Staff said that much of the initial information came from General Padiri, who had stationed a platoon in Aba to monitor the border with Sudan. The platoon leader notified Padiri of the LRA crossing a little after midnight on September 19, and Padiri shared that information with MONUC early in the morning of September 20. UNHCR is prepared to assist in caring for LRA family members and also any unarmed LRA elements who choose to surrender, and MONUC would transport them to Kinshasa, should that be the agreed destination. It will be important, however, to keep President Museveni well informed of developments and Congolese and MONUC response, to defuse the possibility that he would send Ugandan troops into the DRC, as he has recently been threatening to do.

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